

M I N U T E S

PRINCIPAL STAFF MEETING Tuesday, October 24, 2005

Present:	Bill O'Donnell	Rick Heaslip
	Herb Andrick	Carol Lagodich
	Dick Judy	Greg Kist
	Louis Aspey	Greg Stone
	Ron Bricker	Truman Wolfe
	Steve Carpenter	Carolyn Hefner
		Dennis Burns

The meeting was called to order by the facilitator Rick Heaslip at 8:00 am.

BILL O'DONNELL

Bill reviewed NRCS involvement with the State Emergency Board which FSA is the lead agency. At the State Emergency Board meeting FSA provided training to those in attendance. Bill recommends that each DC get with their CED to review a book that FSA has put together for emergency situations and each service center should be going over this with every employee in that location. One example is: If you receive a suspicious call how you can trace it back to the telephone it was called from. NRCS is going to have more involvement in making sure that at the state level and county levels, that we have an understanding of what to do in emergencies and who has what responsibilities.

Bill reviewed the draft policy dealing with Certified Conservation Planner. Rick Heaslip and his staff are meeting with him today to finalize the draft policy. When they complete the final draft it will be sent to ASTC-FO's and some principal staff members to review for comments. Upon completion this will be sent to Ron Hilliard for final approval.

HERB ANDRICK

Last week Rick and Herb attended the CSP Debriefing Meeting held in Fort Worth, TX. NHQ said they were going to listen to what the field and states had to say but that lasted for about an hour and they went into explaining how they were improving the program for FY-06. This was more of a dry run for the training on the 2006 CSP sites which is next week in St. Louis.

Sam Sheets and Valerie Hannon are the lead DC's for the 2006 CSP watersheds and will be attending the meeting in St. Louis. A meeting is set up with Dan Soloman from Virginia to develop the new practice list and the enhancement list for the North Fork of the Shenandoah Watershed.

Some major changes in the Program are:

- Will not be doing Pasture Conditioning scoring to determine category placement on the applications.
- Rick Heaslip reviewed the alternative for the Pasture condition score; the farmer will now have to prove that they are in compliance with NRCS Prescribed Grazing Standard. They will need to have records on livestock and forage balance, drought plans, timing of grazing, duration of grazing and managed access to water. Our employees will need to become familiar with our standard and the farmers will have to bring in records to show that they are following the prescribed grazing plan.
- The water quality assessment tool was demonstrated last week and states will receive more training on this next week in St. Louis. This will make it easier for states to determine if the applicant is in compliance with the water quality resource concerns.

Other Items:

- Still anticipating a winter signup, possibly announced to start December 1st.
- This could be a 30 day sign up this will take us to mid January.
- Remind the FO's in the CSP watersheds that when the sign up starts that someone needs to be in the office every day. The offices will not be closing for annual leave. So ask the employees to schedule their leave accordingly.
- CD affected in the 2006 CSP: Western, part of Capitol, Little Kanawha, Tygarts Valley, Elk, Potomac Valley-Hardy County and the West Fork Districts.
- Looking to schedule training for all offices involved in this years watersheds.
- Looking at who we can detail into these areas to assist. Herb proposed to train the Soil Conservationist through out the state and put them on notice that they could be called and detailed into theses offices if needed.
- Looking at Jackson's Mill for the training; need to select a date, when this is scheduled we will send out the information to those affected.

Greg Stone

We just trained employees on how to do pasture condition scoring since CSP was the main reason that we did this. My question is did we waste a bunch of time and effort?

Rick Heaslip's Reply:

- A little bit of time and effort. They changed it around, the thing we are going to have to look at is every one of the components for the pasture condition score, we need to look at them to see if they will work as an enhancement and from the National level they were promoting that you look at the scoring and find as many enhancements factors as possible. This is a good tool for us to use.

Rick Heaslip

Bryan Lee, Casey Shrader, Barb McWhorter, and Isaac Wolford conducted a Certified Conservation Planning training session last week to 20 individuals with 11 WVCA and 9 with NRCS. This was extended to 4 day which seemed to work better. (Individuals took a pre and post test and this doubled their score.) The new draft policy sets a 6 months time frame from the date of the training to have their three (3) conservation plans into the state office for review. In the past we had no time frame to submit the plans for review and it would be a year later or more before the plan would be submitted.

Individuals in the training identified the need for more training in the following:

- They did not know the difference between the Nutrient Management Plan and a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan.
- They need more field time to identify Resource Concerns.

Rick feels they need to work closer with the District Conservationist to get more field time.

The plans will be review by Rick Heaslip's staff depending on the contents of the plan. Rick recommends that the District Conservationist review the plans before they are forwarded to the state office.

Bill O'Donnell asked that the service centers where an environmental specialist is located, needs to make sure they have an e-authentication login to use the computers for toolkit planning.

Rick said for those outside the agency, NRCS will accept a hand written plan but for those in NRCS are to use toolkit.

LOUIS ASPEY

We sent a draft letter to Norm Bailey and others concerning North Fork Hughes, Wilson Property, We have to see any agreement that is proposed to go into the deed before it is executed. We have to make sure that when the people receive payment that there is an instrument in their deed so that any future owners can not come back to seek payment for the same problem.

Greg Kist stated that the attorney is working on the agreement for the District and as soon as they receive a draft copy it will be forwarded to Louis for review.

Louis reminded the group that a Lost River teleconference will follow this meeting.

RON BRICKER

Still have not received any allowances so at this point we have not issued any travel or supply budgets. One thing FNM plans to work on this week and next is our obligations, we are going to be undergoing a review next week from NHQ and one of the things we are required to do is to go through our List of our open receivable and payables (901). Ron will be asking the Program Managers to review this list before the appraisal.

Bill O'Donnell

Just to review that we have the WV Partnership Meeting next week. Operations review is scheduled for November 7-10, 2005.

Working on the new contribution agreement for the Grassland Technicians, we have this draft and it has been forwarded to Truman Wolfe for review. We noticed on a few typing errors on the statement of work, these will be corrected and faxed to Truman.

Boot Camp starts this week; we are supplying all the moderators for all six weeks. Also, supplying trainers, field sites for boot camp as requested by the Chief.

Carolyn Hefner

State Committee meeting starts tomorrow at the Guthrie Center. The annual conference just checking that Bill O'Donnell has checked by Herb Andrick in regards to his presentations at the conference? Yes Bill checked with him and he will be available.

Reminded everyone to make their reservations for the conference and if you have any problems let her know today. A draft of the agenda was emailed to Roseanne Kennedy and Carol Lagodich. Ask Carol Lagodich to get back with her regarding the number of tables NRCS will need for displays.

GREG KIST

Area II partnership meeting which is typically done be for the statewide supervisors meeting, should be a good opportunity for them to update us on what is going on in their districts and for us to update from the NRCS standpoint.

Performance appraisals, closing in on completing all of them in the west area, hopefully have them all tied down this week.

Plan to have the area goals completed and sent to Bill O'Donnell by the end of this week.

GREG STONE

Question for Herb Andrick

Q. Do we still need to modify contracts when practice application year changes?

A. You can install it up to a year late without a modification and they will still be in compliance with the contract. If it is more than a year late they you need to modify.

Q. Is this calendar year from the date planned?

A. Yes.

Additional reports:

- **Will not be able to attend the State Technical Committee Meeting.**
- **Spot checks 80% complete for last year. This also takes care of the Field Office reviews. The spot check and FO reviews are completed at the same time.**

Meeting adjourned with the decision of the PS to cancel the next Monday meeting and reconvene on November 7, 2005 with Herb Andrick as the facilitator.